

VZCZCXRO8878

RR RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHDH RUEHHM RUEHLH RUEHLN RUEHMA
RUEHNEH RUEHPB RUEHPOD RUEHPW RUEHSL RUEHTM RUEHTRO
DE RUEHNE #1856/01 2471323
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 041323Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7918
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC
RUCPDC/NOAA NMFS WASHINGTON DC
RUEAEPA/HQ EPA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUETIAA/DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHMCSUU/HQ USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHMCSUU/NGIC INTEL OPS CHARLOTTESVILLE VA
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 001856

SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/PCI, OES/STC, OES/SAT, OES/EGC, AND SCA/INS
STATE FOR STAS
DOE FOR INTERNATIONAL
INTERIOR FOR FWS RILEY
STATE PASS TO NSF FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KSCA](#) [KGGH](#) [SENV](#) [TSPL](#) [TBIO](#) [ENRG](#) [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: NEW DELHI EST OFFICE HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE WEEK OF AUGUST 31,
2009 TO SEPTEMBER 4, 2009.

REF: CHENNAI 284

1. Below is a compilation of Environment, Science, and Technology
highlights from Embassy New Delhi for the week of August 31 -
September 04, 2009, including the following:

- Minister of Environment and Forests Ramesh visits China
- Valmiki Tiger Reserve Bounces Back
- Ministry of Human Resources Development Initiates Steps to
Enhance Quality of Higher Education
- India Plans Additional Antarctic Research Station by 2012
- ISRO Completes Design of Chandrayaan II

ENVIRONMENT

Minister of Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh visits China

2. While much of the press have concentrated on the climate
rhetoric coming from Ramesh while in China, the major deliverable
was focused primarily on non-climate related environmental issues.
Ramesh stated the two countries have agreed to set up a joint
working group on the environment to address issues such as curbing
poaching and the illegal trade in wildlife, pollution remediation,
and reforestation. The Indian delegation requested Chinese
officials clamp down on the illegal trade in tiger parts and Chinese
officials requested the same regarding the Tibetan Antelope. Ramesh
also noted India would seek Chinese help in using satellite
technology to measure progress in afforestation projects. In regard
to the international climate negotiations, Ramesh stated there was a
"total convergence" of views between India and China and both
countries agreed to jointly fight any attempt by Western nations to
link trade with climate change by imposing trade-related penalties
on developing countries that fail to reduce their emissions.
However, this "total convergence" is little more than a restatement

of both nations standard policy in the run-up to Copenhagen and should be treated as such.

Valmiki Tiger Reserve Bounces Back

¶3. Among reports of an overall decline in Indian tiger populations (67 deaths nationwide reported since January 2009) the Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR) in Bihar reports that over the last four years, eight tiger cubs have been born and are doing well. Since VTR was established as a tiger reserve in 1994, it has suffered from poor management and lack of enforcement which led to a drastic decline in its wildlife population. However, in 2003 the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) and the Bihar Forest Department, with support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, started a long term recovery plan for VTR. WTI's Ujjal K. Sarma, who is the coordinator for the project, informed ESTOffs that a major impact on wildlife stems from the 140 villages that surround the park and depend on forest resources for their livelihood. The aim of the project, in addition to utilizing proper management and enforcement techniques, has been to reduce the dependency of local communities on forest produce, including fuel wood, by introducing bio-gas technology and fuel efficient stoves. The project is ongoing and appears to be paying dividends for VTR's tiger population.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Ministry of Human Resources Development Initiates Steps to Enhance Quality of Higher Education

NEW DELHI 00001856 002 OF 002

¶4. The relatively low quality of Indian students and the acute faculty shortage in institutions of higher learning, namely universities and engineering colleges, appears to have severely hampered the Ministry of Human Resources Development's (MHRD's) ambitious plans to expand higher education and meet the needs of an increasingly knowledge-based economy. In an attempt to address these issues, MHRD has recently come out with a series of proposals including: creating a research endowment fund of not less than USD 41 million for each university; forming a network of academics working abroad to facilitate sourcing Indian origin faculty from other countries, as well as foreign faculty, for Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Science; mandatory accreditation of all institutions and departments; and setting higher education degree and quality assurance standards similar to the European Union's Bologna Accord.

India Plans Additional Antarctic Research Station by 2012

¶5. According to newspaper reports, India plans to set up a new research station in Antarctica at Larsmann Hill at an estimated cost of USD 47.5 million. The research station is to be named "Barathi" and will be located about 3000 Kms from India's current base in the Schirmacher Oasis. The National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research in Goa will be responsible for setting up the station which is expected to accommodate 25 researchers and be operational by ¶2012. The key areas of research include seismic activity, climate change, medical research, and marine ecology of the polar region.

ISRO Completes Design of Chandrayaan II

¶6. Madhavan Nair, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), has notified the press that ISRO has "finalized" the design for India's next lunar mission, Chandrayaan II (C-II) in consultation with Russia. ISRO is to develop the lunar orbiter while Russia will develop both the lander and the rover. ISRO is also expected to offer space for additional scientific payloads to other countries. As part of the new design, ISRO is contemplating the feasibility of including a compact nuclear power generator on C-II. ISRO representative Dr. Shantanu Bhatwadekar told ESTFSN that plans to use nuclear power on C-II were very preliminary as the organization had not worked out multiple details including issues involving radiation safety. The recent loss of communication and untimely cancellation of the Chandrayaan I mission

(RefTel) will impact ISRO's "final" plans for C-II.

ROEMER